

The effects of different leadership qualities on psychological resilience of police personnel

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Uniformed police face a combination of acute high risk job demands (due to incidents on the street) and regular chronic job demands (for example due to bureaucracy). As such, resilience is key for sustained performance and well-being. Leadership is considered a pivotal resource for resilience. However, which aspects of leadership are key in sustaining resilience is unclear. The current study investigated several aspects of leadership (i.e., transformational leadership, participative behaviors and leader efficacy) and their influence on indicators of police personnel's resilience. In line with Zautra, Hall and Reich (2010) resilience indicators included aspects of recovery (psychosomatic complaints, time needed to recover after work), motivation (work engagement, energy at work) and performance (self-reported performance during most recent incident). Participants (n=413) were Dutch uniformed police officers from three different districts. Questionnaires were administered online and participation was voluntary. Regression analyses were conducted to assess which aspects of leadership were relevant for the indicators of resilience. Results showed that transformational leadership behaviors predicted psychosomatic complaints negatively and energy and work engagement positively. Participative behaviors also predicted energy at work positively and negatively predicted time to recover after work. Leader efficacy predicted self-reported performance during the most recent incident. A limitation is that this study was cross-sectional; a longitudinal study might show a different pattern of results. The findings indicate that different leadership qualities are important for different aspects of psychological resilience of police personnel. These insights could be used to support leaders in enhancing resilience of police personnel.